



# THE BOUNDARY MARKER

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## USIBWC PROVIDES KEY SUPPORT FOLLOWING FATAL MARINE HELICOPTER CRASH

On January 23, two Marine helicopters collided in mid-air over Falcon State Park next to the USIBWC's Falcon Dam Project, killing four crewmen. In the aftermath, USIBWC staff played a vital role in the recovery, earning a medal and Certificate of Appreciation for their efforts.

The collision, which occurred at 9:30 p.m., was witnessed by Falcon Project Security Officer Angel Sosa. USIBWC employees and other residents of Falcon Village heard the crash and saw the fire from the burning wreckage. The Marines, reservists based at Camp Pendleton, California, were doing reconnaissance as part of a Joint Task Force-6 (JTF-6) drug interdiction program when their helicopters went down.

Immediately following the crash, Project Manager Mike P. Evans offered assistance to the State Park Superintendent and Department of Defense. Evans, along with License and Lease Manager Raul Garcia and Heavy Mobile Equipment Operator Eulogia Garcia, worked with the State and Department of Defense to determine that there was no threat to the environment or reservoir. The Department of Defense asked if the IBWC could remove the wreckage, under military guidance, with the least possible damage to the surrounding habitat.

The project, which operates and maintains Falcon Dam, is equipped with all terrain vehicles and

machinery, and staffed with highly-qualified and experienced personnel. All project employees felt honored to be able to assist the military and the families of the victims by providing a prompt and dignified recovery. Field recovery was provided by Lolo Garcia, Tavo Canales, Ron Graham, Mel Guerra III, and Charlie Chapa, with supervision or coordination

through Mike P. Evans, Silverio Garza, Jr., Scott Mullins, and Irene Muñoz. Other project employees assisted by ensuring that needed supplies were readily available.

Maj. Mike Dickey, USMC, called the USIBWC a truly professional organization whose efforts were simply amazing. "They responded immediately by cutting trails through the desert to provide access to the crash sites and then provided all the necessary manpower, time,

and equipment required to successfully recover both aircraft. All those that participated in the operation exhibited the willingness and capability to get the job done." The IBWC's efforts meant that it was not necessary to mobilize troops from Ft. Bliss, Texas.

On behalf of the Department of Defense and the victims' families, Evans was asked to thank all USIBWC officials and he was awarded the Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing Medallion from the Commanding General, Fourth Marine Aircraft Division. Additionally, the staff received a Certificate of Appreciation and General Officer Letter of Appreciation from Brig. General John Yingling, Commander of JTF-6.





## OFFICIALS REVIEW DROUGHT CONDITIONS AT NEW MEXICO RESERVOIRS

In late February, the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) hosted a tour of Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs for Mexican officials and members of the news media from El Paso and Cd. Juarez. The purpose of the tour was to allow the Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, Mexican water managers, and the media to observe the low storage conditions at the reservoirs.

Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs store water for use by the Elephant Butte Irrigation District in New Mexico, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 in Texas, including the City of El Paso, Texas, and Mexico. In accordance with the Convention of 1906, the United States is to deliver 60,000 acre-feet per year of Rio Grande water to Mexico at Ciudad Juarez when there is sufficient water for a full allocation. However, in the event that drought forces a reduction in water allotments to U.S. users, the treaty provides for a proportional reduction to Mexico.

According to Reclamation, in late February Elephant Butte only held 405,075 acre-feet or 20% of capacity while Caballo storage was at 48,369 acre-feet or 21% full. Due to low storage, the Bureau is allotting all water users only 10.9% of their normal supply.

Snowmelt runoff from the mountains of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado accounts for most of the inflow to Elephant Butte Reservoir. Depending on snowfall in the upstream mountain ranges, storage conditions could improve. If storage increases, water allotments will rise accordingly. Although allotments could go up somewhat in the coming months, Reclamation still projects deliveries to be far below a full supply. The last time water users saw a reduction in their allotments was 1978 when

deliveries for the entire irrigation season were only 25% of a full supply.

On the bright side, at press time, snowpack was increasing in the watershed, boosting the chances that allotments will be upped in the coming weeks.

Reclamation operates Elephant Butte and Caballo Dams and is responsible for making the allocations and the deliveries to the Rio Grande Project water users. The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, is responsible for applying the 1906 treaty provisions and ensuring delivery of water to Mexico.

The Convention of 1906 deals only with delivery of Rio Grande water to Mexico in the El Paso-

Juarez region, upstream of Ft. Quitman, TX. A separate agreement, the 1944 Water Treaty, addresses allocations of Rio Grande water from Ft. Quitman to the Gulf of Mexico.



*Drought has left bare shoreline at Elephant Butte Reservoir*



*Boaters face more navigational hazards due to low lake levels*



## USIBWC EMPLOYEES SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES

Anyone who has spent time with the employees of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission knows that their public service goes beyond their jobs as government workers. Numerous employees are involved in their communities in many different capacities.

Fausto Garza, a Power Plant Controller at Falcon Dam, is a member of the School Board for the Roma Independent School District, and is involved in local politics and other education projects.

Mario Lewis, Legal Advisor, is a member of the Board of Managers of the El Paso County Health District, Thomason General Hospital, where he serves as Vice President and Chairman of the Finance Committee. He was appointed to the board by the El Paso County Commissioners Court.

Lewis also serves on the Board of Directors of the Texas Legal Services Center, a statewide legal support program for attorneys, providing legal services programs serving indigent individuals in civil legal matters. He recently completed a term as Board President.

Ron Graham, High Voltage Electrician at Falcon, is involved in various missionary services. This year, he will be traveling to Honduras to make water wells for communities in need through a program sponsored by Living Water International. He also provides support for an orphanage in Reynosa, Mexico.

Tony Chavez, whose day job is Compliance Officer at Headquarters, was recently elected Chairman of the Las Cruces Housing Authority. He was appointed to the Housing Authority Board by the Mayor of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The Housing Authority establishes policies for the administration of the city and county housing authorities, which implement federal programs providing affordable housing for low-income and elderly citizens.

Colleen Elliott of Acquisitions and her husband Bob have volunteered with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary for more than ten years. They started with the Coast Guard Auxiliary while living in Alaska. Their commitment continues with Flotilla 2-5 in Elephant Butte, NM.

The Elliotts conduct safety patrols on the lake, towing disabled vessels, including a lot of jet skis, and

providing regatta patrols for the Fourth of July and other events as needed. They've racked up several assists to the recreational boating community over the years.

In addition to the altruistic reasons for involvement, they wanted to learn more about boating safety. The Auxiliary has several courses, including Seamanship, Communications (VHF Radio), and Search and Rescue, among others. Colleen and Bob are proud of the special auxiliary status they earned by completing all of the courses.

As there is no U.S. Coast Guard Unit on Elephant Butte Lake, Flotilla 2-5 works closely with New Mexico State Parks Marine Enforcement Officers. Joint participation in training exercises culminated in April of 2002 with a three-day event at the lake. Participants included Auxiliary members from four flotillas in the region, Marine Enforcement Officers from several parks, the New Mexico State Defense Force, and Civil Air Patrol. It was an intense exercise with multiple events staged simultaneously to test and practice first responder resources.

Jim Robinson, Chief of Engineering Services, is a longtime blood donor who donated his 128th unit of whole blood in January. He encourages other staff to donate every eight weeks. Another blood drive supporter is Silverio Garza, Jr., Falcon's Assistant Project Manager, who is active in establishing Red Cross blood drives in his community. He also raises money for diabetes clinics through the Lions Club.

The Knights of Columbus, which supports the Catholic church, has a number of active members among the Falcon Project

staff -- Joel J. Garza, Rene Molina, and Silverio Garza, Jr. Joel also does fund-raising for clinics through the Mason Hope Lodge 471 in Rio Grande City while Rene supports a project to restore wildlife refuges in the area.

Joel Garza and his Falcon colleague, Roque Reyes, are also active in the Starr County Fair Association which helps area youth learn about the responsibilities of taking care of animals. Octavio Canales, a mechanic at Falcon, supports veterans through the V.F.W. while Mechanic Helper Eflen Carrera is involved in the 21st Century Youth Program which helps kids with schooling and sports.

There are many more USIBWC employees who dedicate their time and efforts to their communities, bringing new significance to the concept of public service.



*Colleen Elliott in her Coast Guard Auxiliary uniform*



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